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This high school teaching guide on the history of the English language consists of 36 short essays written by teachers and assembled under five headings: (1) The Indo-European Language Family, (2) Language Analysis, (3) The Old English Period, (4) The Middle English Period and the Renaissance, and (5) The Modern English Period in America. A bibliography on the subject is appended. (LH)

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WE SPEAK WITH THE TONGUE OF MEN AND OF ANGELS

ESSAYS IN THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

English Section
Department of Public Instruction
Raleigh, North Carolina
1968

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"We Speak with the Tongue of Men and of Angels" is one part of *A Guide for The Teacning of English in the Schools of North Carolina*, a guide that will attempt to coordinate and synchronize instruction in the broad areas of language, literature, and composition. It will begin at the beginning -- at kindergarten -- and extend through grade twelve. It will be a sequential program of teaching and learning of all the language arts -- listening, speaking, reading, writing. The guide, a different approach to curriculum construction for North Carolina, is a design that will give logical, conceptual order to the many segments of the English curriculum.

CONTENTS

Foreword

I. The Indo-European Language Family

The Indo-European Language Family 1
The English Language as One Member of the Indo-European Language Family 4
More About the English Language as One Member of The Indo-European Language Family 6
Features that Characterize the Germanic Languages 8
The Family Relationships of the Indo-European Languages As Confirmed by the Discovery of Sanskrit 10

II. Language Analysis

Theories of the Development of Speech as Communication 12
Grimm's Law 13
Verner's Law 14
Analytic and Synthetic Languages 15
Differences Between Analytic and Synthetic Languages 17

III. The Old English Period

The Christian Conversion of England 18
The Teutonic Conquest 20
More About the Teutonic Conquest 22
The Viking Age 23
More About the Viking Age 25
The Settlement of the Danes in England 26
Literature of the Old English Period 28
Relationship of the English Language of the Old English Period to the English Language of the Modern English Period 29
Features that Characterize Old English 31

IV. The Middle English Period and the Renaissance

The Norman Conquest 33
The Effect of the Norman Conquest on the Development of the English Language 35
The Effect of the Black Death and the Peasants' Revolt upon the Language 37
William Caxton and the Printing Press 39
The Universities and Our Language 40
Middle English and Modern English: Similarities and Differences 43
Features that Characterize Middle English 45
The Literary Language of the Renaissance 47
English and the Classical Languages 49

V. The Modern English Period in America

The Settlement of America by People from Many Countries 51
More About the Settlement of America by People from Many Countries 54
Improved Means of Transportation and Communication 55
The Effect of Two World Wars Upon Our Language 56
Scientific, Technological, and Industrial Developments and the English Language 58
The English Language Today 60
The Future of English 62

VI. Bibliography

Books 63-69
General Reference 70

THE INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGE FAMILY

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Man has long wondered about the origin of language, and much research has gone into the subject. However, we do not know, and may never know, exactly how man first gained the ability to communicate through speech; but through comparative analysis, called historical or comparative linguistics, the evolution of the thousands of different languages existing today can be reconstructed in theory. Systematic similarities can be used to reconstruct some of the older stages of language; and those languages found to resemble each other in words, grammar, general construction, and pronunciation can be organized into related groups called language families. It can, therefore, be supposed that because those languages in a related group closely resemble each other, they must have had, at some earlier time, a single parent language, which changed as time passed because of various pressures exerted upon the original language.

Among the various original language families that philologists have reconstructed, there is one great *language family now most generally referred to as Indo-European.*

Quite apart from its importance to us because it includes English, the Indo-European family is one of the most significant original families, both in geographical extent and in the number of users. It takes in several languages in Asia , almost all those in Europe, and, naturally, those in North and South America that are of European origin.

The source of Indo-European is conjectured to have been in the ancient Mediteranean basin, where it may have had links with Hamitic, Semitic, and perhaps Caucasian languages. Speakers of this language perhaps moved northward into Europe following the last retreat of the ice, where they settled somewhere north of the Alps. Through linguistic studies in recent decades, there is a great mass of evidence that has led to an almost universal conclusion that central or southeastern Europe became the home of speakers of this original primitive tongue. It is further believed that about 2500 B.C. these people grew in numbers and began to move to other parts of the continent. Some went southward to the Balkan areas we now call Greece; others went westward to the Alps and later to Italy, France, and Spain. Some moved northward to the Baltic countries and on to Great Britain; others went east to Russia. The farthest east any seem to have gone was Asia Minor and northern India.

Naturally many details are obscure, but the general lines of the expansion are fairly clear. These groups took their original language with them, but once they were separated from each other, their mother tongue began to change. The original stock of words remained, but sounds and forms were gradually changed, and new words were added as the need for them arose.

Through a comparison of these related or derivative languages believed to have originated from the prehistoric speakers of Indo-European, many efforts have been made to furnish theoretical information concerning: (1) the geographical location of the original home of the Indo-Europeans; (2) what these people might have been like; and (3) the form which the original parent language might have had.

A comparison of common vocabulary words found in both European and Asiatic languages suggests that before their dispersal, the Indo-European speakers were a nomadic or semi-nomadic pastoral people of the northern temperate zone. We can assume that they had cattle and sheep, for there are common words for both of these. They also must have had domestic animals, fowls, and insects, for there are words for dog, pig, goat, goose, duck, bee, and horse. They had vehicles, an important technical factor in their expansion and conquests, for there are common words for wheel, axle, nave, and yoke. The Indo-Europeans must have had at least some acquaintance with agriculture, for there are common words for grain, plough, and furrow. There are a number of common words for tools and weapons, including arrows. There is evidence that stone was used for these; but the Indo-Europeans also knew metal, for there are common words for copper, bronze, gold, and silver. Their vocabulary shows a familiarity with pottery and weaving. There are also common words for house and for door, a fact that suggests something more substantial than tents for homes. There is a large common Indo-European vocabulary for family relationships, and it would seem that the family played an important part in their social organization. They also seem to have formed themselves into loosely linked community groups with common gods and a similar social culture. They knew both rain and snow, but their summers seem to have been hot, suggesting a continental climate. The wild animals they knew included wolves, bears, otters, mice, hares, and beavers -- but apparently not lions, tigers, elephants, monkeys, or camels -- so presumably they lived in a cool, temperate zone. It seems, also, that rivers and streams were common, but since there is no word for sea or ocean, they were apparently an inland people. The Indo-Europeans apparently had learned the art of war rather thoroughly and no doubt they were under some kind of environmental pressure (like a change of climate or perhaps exhaustion of pastures) which increased their need to migrate or expand.

Scholars have been able to reconstruct with a considerable degree of success the theory that original Indo-European must have contained other language features which are found to be rather common characteristics among the related languages. All the Indo-European languages possess in common certain features which can be explained only on the assumption that they are descended from a common source. The phonological system of original Indo-European has been totally reconstructed on this basis.

It seems to be a law of language that, as it becomes older, change is inevitable. In the end, members of the original group may speak different languages. Perhaps in this theoretical light we can, therefore, understand our relationship to this original language which linguists call Indo-European.

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AS ONE MEMBER OF THE INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGE FAMILY

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Henry Sweet wrote in 1891 that teachers fail to realize "how unsettled grammar still is" and in 1894 Jesperson proposed the thesis that change in language is improvement, not corruption. Even today this improvement in language continues.

Sometimes we can see the need for change and accept it better if we look back at our language and see the changes that have taken place since man first began to use language for communication. We might even have a better understanding if we look at three possible factors that could account for the changes. One is the general tendency of language to change with the lapse of time. Another is the migration of some of the speakers of a given tongue to a new home. A third factor is conquest. An alien tongue that has been imposed upon a conquered people tends to be spoken in a changed way.

How did our language develop? There is no proof that human language did or did not spring from a common starting point. However, evidence does point to the probability that there was a single language from which a number of others have sprung. It is believed by most students of language that nearly all of the languages now spoken in Europe and North and South America and some of those spoken in Asia go back to one speech ancestor -- the Indo-European.

The parent tongue from which the Indo-European languages have sprung had already become divided and scattered before the dawn of history. There is no written record of the common Indo-European language since the various peoples by whom those languages are spoken have lost all memory of their former association.

English is but one of 132 languages comprising the Indo-European linguistic family. It differs from other Germanic languages because it has been far more simplified and because it has taken over a large number of words from Latin and other tongues. Because of this passion for Latin, some scholars have been tempted to say that English was more a Romance than a Germanic language. However, the fact remains that we could not begin to speak our language without its Germanic or English elements; for the sign-word inventory of English is almost entirely Germanic. Since these are the high frequency items in a language, it falls that 80 to 85 percent of the items in an ordinary paragraph of English prose are Germanic. English is basically a Germanic language.

Among the living languages, English is unique in its capacity to assimilate and grow. Today, its distribution is the widest of any language on the globe. It is the native or official language of countries covering one-fifth of the earth's land surface, and its speaking population numbers one in every ten.

MORE ABOUT
THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AS ONE MEMBER OF THE INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGE FAMILY

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The study of our heritage has always been a fascinating detective game. We follow clues to find our racial and cultural backgrounds; and so, too, do we follow clues to unearth our linguistic background. As we study the history of words and the patterns of putting words together into phrases and sentences to communicate ideas and feelings, we find that language itself is a heritage. A study of linguistics may add to the enjoyment of our oral and written expression.

Because language is not rigid, it is sometimes difficult to set an exact dividing line between two distinct languages. Linguists believe that there are between three and five thousand distinguishable languages. Definite relationships have led to grouping them into "language families" and "sub-families." Philologists have named thirteen families in which the members have many characteristics in common.

English belongs to the family known as Indo-European, and scholars have been able to demonstrate likenesses within the family that have led to the conclusion that the Indo-European language had its beginning in the area from Lithuania to southern Russia. Its homeland was probably the banks of three rivers - the Oder, the Elbe, and the Vistula. It would seem that many people, in search of better farm lands, migrated and spread out in every direction. We know that migration brings changes in people and their language, and conquest increases the likelihood of change.

The basic Indo-European language gradually covered nearly all of Europe, part of the Near East, Iran, and finally northern India. Altogether about one and a half billion people now speak some language that descended from the language of this tribe of migrants from northern Europe.

There are nine main groupings under the Indo-European family, and all of them have certain features in common. All of them are inflectional and form syntactical distinctions such as case, number, gender, tense, and voice by varying the forms of the words. Common word stocks or roots usually have similar pronunciations. The similarities in morphology are the most important common features, and correspondences in sentence structure are next.

Of the nine members of the Indo-European family, English belongs to the Germanic or Teutonic group which is composed of three sub-groups. High German was originally found in the mountains of the southern Germanic area. Low German divided into several sub-divisions having traits special to them in addition to the traits already mentioned as being common to all. The West Germanic groups to which English belongs have four distinguishing features. The first is evidenced by both weak and strong verb conjugations -- what we term regular and irregular verbs. The second is a two-fold declension of adjectives which existed in Old English but is not present in Modern English. The third is a fixed stress accent which is almost always on the root syllable. The last is a regular shifting of consonants according to Grimm's Law.

There is a recognizable similarity among all of the Teutonic groups, but English of all living languages is most like Frisian, which is still spoken in Friesland in the Netherlands as well as along the northern shores of Germany. There are dialectical divergencies on several near-by islands.

Certainly we may, from these clues, stress the Germanic character of the language that we speak. Although English has changed its forms and structure quite significantly and has been greatly influenced by both Latin and French, we find that it is still basically a Germanic tongue and more closely related to the language developed from the original Indo-European family.

FEATURES THAT CHARACTERIZE THE GERMANIC LANGUAGES

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The Germanic branch of the Indo-European family was the mother of English. In the several groups which were once a part of the Indo-European family there is a full system of declensions and conjugations and a close resemblance in basic vocabulary words. Before the dawn of recorded history the Indo-European family divided and scattered, some north, others south and west. For the Germanic groups, runic inscriptions of the third century preserve the earliest written records.

The most distinctive feature of the Germanic group is the sound shift that occurred with the progression of time and geographic change. Certain consonants shifted to the next sound following; p > f [piscis = fish]; t > th [tres = three]; k > h [centum = hundred]. When the Indo-European accent was not on the vowel preceding, voiceless spirants became voiced. Consonant sounds were clearly separated (doubled in spelling), and explosive combined consonants (sc, sp, st, str, hr, th, thr) were characteristic. Vowel sounds were independent of the consonants flanking them. Two vowels were often blurred into diphthongs. In addition, there was strong accent on the first syllable and a tendency toward one syllable words.

The Germanic languages were also highly inflected. Old English had three genders, four cases in nouns, and a fifth case in certain pronouns and adjectives. There was a tendency toward natural instead of grammatical gender. Adjectives had a twofold declension, strong and weak, and the definite article was fully inflected.

The division of verbs into strong and weak classes was another distinctive feature of the Germanic language group. The verbs had indicative, imperative, and subjunctive moods, two numbers, and three persons. The past tense forms were unique to Germanic groups, and the Germanic languages had no future tense or passive voice. There were auxiliary verbs to express differences of tense and number.

In the Germanic languages the relationship of words was indicated by inflectional endings on nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and verbs. The sign words (conjunctions, prepositions, and auxiliary verbs) simplified the tendency toward word-order structure.

A strong characteristic of the Germanic vocabulary was the ability to add prefixes and suffixes to create new words and give shades of meaning. Hundreds of words were created from a limited number of root words. Self-explaining compounds, unique to the Germanic family, yielded a wealth of synonyms, which, along with the bold use of metaphor, enriched the language and literature.

In summary, the distinctive consonant sound and shifting vowel tendency, the fixed structure of basic sentence elements and flexible use of short word joining elements, and the unusual capacity of the vocabulary for assimilating outside elements are the basic characteristics that set the Germanic family apart from other Indo-European groups.

THE FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS OF THE INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES AS CONFIRMED BY THE DISCOVERY OF SANSKRIT

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Sanskrit became known to Europeans about the end of the eighteenth century through the grammar of Panini who lived during the 4th century B.C. The entire classical literature of Sanskrit was written in a form which is detailed in Panini's work.

In 1786 Sir William Jones stated that Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin "have sprung from some common source which, perhaps, no longer exists." He was convinced that the Germanic and Celtic languages had the same origin.

Sanskrit as a written language had its beginning about 1200 to 1000 B.C. with the composition of the Rig-Veda, the authoritative sacred book of the Hindus. The tradition is continuous and is easily followed with detail through the Indo-Aryan language to the modern languages.

Indo-European warlike tribes invaded India from north of the Caspian Sea in the second millennium B. C. They imposed their speech and their ways of living on their captives. The language spoken by these invaders was the earliest form of Sanskrit which was preserved in the hymns that the poet-priests began to compose after they entered India.

Sanskrit is probably the most strictly regulated language known to man. Because it has one of the earliest literatures of the Indo-European family, it sheds light on the phases of language which have come from prehistoric man. Such things as inflection, meter, and accent have influenced the language used in religion and in civilization in general.

Sanskrit was and is presently spoken by the learned men of the Hindu faith. It is, however, considered to be an "artificial" language similar to modern English or Italian. It is closely regulated by rules and grammars.

The relationship of Sanskrit to the Indo-European language is quite evident in such words as the following:

Sanskrit	Matar
Latin	Mater
Old Irish	Mathir
English	Mother

Sanskrit	Sunu
Lithuanian	Sunu
Old High German	Sunu
English	Son

Sanskrit is much like Latin and classical Greek in structure, since all have complex inflectional systems. Nouns, adjectives, and pronouns contain number and genders, masculine, feminine, or neuter. The nouns have cases, and there are voices, moods, and tenses for the verbs, which are determined by the number and person.

Because of the prestige and culture it represents, Sanskrit has had a tremendous influence over the other cultural languages of Eastern Asia that have received much of their terminology from Sanskrit.

THEORIES OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPEECH AS COMMUNICATION

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One of the most interesting theories in speech relates to our ability and often inability to reproduce orally sounds which we hear. This method of producing audible sounds in order to communicate is one of the most primitive kinds of speech. Often referred to as "onamatopoeia" or "echoism," the sounds are direct imitations of other sounds. In many instances the imagination and fancy of man must play a keen part in interpreting the various sounds. For instance, "bow-wow" is far from a replica of the sound of a dog, yet we feel in this word an echo to the audible sound produced by a dog. In varying degrees we have developed other words such as sizzle, wheeze, hiss, meow, cuckoo, whip-poor-will, bang, bam, crash, tinkle, clink.

The impossibility of producing perfect imitations of sounds has given rise to wide variations from one language to another. Consider the sound of "quack-quack" to the French "couin-couin."

We are constantly coining and phrasing new sounds to supplement and intensify our speech. Again, we find in echoism a valuable ally in combination with the rhythm of sound. Consider these phrases and the insights which they portray: honky-tonky, zig-zag, hot-shot, boo-hoo, and more recently creepy-people.

Another prominent theory dating back to the primitive language is the "pooh-pooh" or interjectional theory. The basis of this theory is that man naturally responds to pain or joy. When a man is startled, he naturally opens his mouth, and when the air is pushed back through the protruded lips, a sound similar to "O" is heard. Contempt leads him to blow away, thereby producing a sound similar to "pooh." As primitive as this theory may be, it is generally accepted as having elements of truth.

Man's success in communication in our era must in large part be directly related to our early ancestors, as they, in their primitive fashion, attempted to convey their ideas by both imitation of sounds and natural responses to pain and joy.

GRIMM'S LAW

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Grimm's Law is a systematic statement of consonant sound correspondences between the Germanic language and other branches of the Indo-European language. It is credited to the German philologist, Jakob Grimm, 1785-1863, who in collaboration with his brother, Wilhelm, collected and wrote the famous Grimm's Fairy Tales.

Influenced by Rasmus Kirstian Rask, a brilliant Danish scholar who had discovered the consonant sound correspondences between Latin and the Teutonic languages, Grimm compared hundreds of pairs of words whose meanings were similiar, but whose forms differed as between the Germanic and non-Germanic branches of the Indo-European language. He discovered that in all branches, except the Germanic, that the consonant sounds remained the same as the original but that in the Germanic there was a shifting and substitution.

In this shift the voiceless plosives, p, t, k, lost their plosion quality and became Germanic voiceless fricatives, f, th, and h. Thus, voiceless p shifted to voiceless f as seen in the following:

Latin	*English*	*Swedish*	*German*
plenus	*full*	*full*	*voll*
piscus	*fish*	*fisk*	*fisch*
pedis	*foot*	*fot*	*fuss*
pater	*father*	*foder*	*voder*

(Fredrick Bodmer, The Loom of Language)

Also, Grimm discovered that the Indo-European voiced, aspirated plosives, bh, dh, gh, dropped their aspiratory quality and became the Germanic voiced b, d, and g. For example, dhughter became the modern English word daughter.

In addition, the voiced plosives b, d, and g shifted to the Germanic voiceless fricatives p, t, and k. For instance , the Latin word duo became the English two and the Latin word genu became the English word knee.

VERNER'S LAW

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In 1876, Karl Adolph Verner, a Danish philologist, discovered a factor which accounted for many of the most disturbing exceptions to Grimm's Law. Verner's discovery attempted to explain the apparent exceptions. His law "states that the voiceless fricatives (f), (s), (o), and (x) became voiced in Germanic to (b), (x), (ð), and (ɣ) when they occurred between voiced sounds unless they were immediately preceded by the chief stress of the word." (George L. Brooks, A History of the English Language. London: Andre Deutsch Limited, 1958.)

"Although Verner's Law was completed in Common Germanic, the connexion between voicing of consonants and lack of stress is one to which parallels can be quoted from later periods of language." (George L. Brooks, A History of the English Language. London: Andre Deutsch Limited, 1958). An example of this can be found in the words of and off which were originally the same word; now of has a lightly stressed or voiced consonant.

The analogy of words has almost obscured the effects of Verner's Law in Modern English except in a few instances, such as the (z), and (r) in was and were, and the (ð) and (d) in seethe and sodden (formerly past participle of seethe). Old English shows clearly the effects of Verner's Law. In recent years, however, Modern English has produced a "new Verner's Law" as seen in the words possible and posséss where the first ss is pronounced voiceless (s) after the accented vowel but voiced (z) after the unaccented vowel.

By tracing the history of languages, one can see the trends of development in languages -- how all the languages of the world descended from a single original language. The differences have resulted from the differences in speaking.

ANALYTIC AND SYNTHETIC LANGUAGES

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In studying the growth and background of the English language one is concerned both with morphology (including construction of words and parts of words) and with syntax (including construction of phrases). Languages differ more in morphology than in syntax. No simple scheme will classify languages as to their morphology, but one suggested scheme distinguishes between analytic and synthetic languages.

Analytic languages use few bound forms (linguistic forms which are never spoken alone - such as y in Tommy or ing in flying). Rather, they use free forms (such as Phil came or Phil or came or coming).

Synthetic languages use many bound forms "telescoped" together, such as in French or Latin verbs.

The distinction between analytic and synthetic languages is relative except in the extremes. Two extremes are Chinese (analytic) and Eskimo (synthetic).

In modern Chinese the ideogram for each word must be individually learned. Each word is a one-syllable morpheme (simple linguistic form, such as bird), a phrase-word (such as jack-in-the-box), or a compound word (such as lamp-cage for lantern). In Chinese the word order is all-important since there are no genders, no endings, no cases. For example, one reverses the order of She see I to I see she. English bears a resemblance to the purely analytical Chinese in the use of compound words (such as teeny-weeny, hanky-panky, goody-goody, and singsong).

The Eskimo language unites long strings of bound forms into single words to express one thought, which in English might be a sentence of nine or ten words.

The Romance languages and the Slavic languages are also quite synthetic. A student translating into English from one of these languages might find that his translation has many more words than were in the original.

One may conclude that English is analytic; and, to a large extent, it is. Although English is a member of the Germanic branch of the Indo-European family of languages, once highly synthetic, it has moved toward analysis. Originally, many concepts were expressed by means of single lengthy words made up of roots, prefixes, and suffixes. In modern English, these same concepts are expressed by many short words loosely connected by syntactical devices. Thus, a concept expressed by a verb-preposition idiom (such as put up with) is difficult for a speaker of a more synthetic tongue. Whereas he learns case endings and many verb forms, the speaker of English has only the possessive case ending to remember and combines pronouns with any of four or five verb forms in a verb phrase (I shall love rather than amabo). At first glance, this may cause English to seem a simpler tongue, but, as any foreigner knows, the complications are legion!

Generally speaking, then, English is analytic; but it is more synthetic than is Chinese while not nearly so synthetic as Eskimo.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ANALYTIC AND SYNTHETIC LANGUAGES

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According to Mario Pei in his Glossary of Linguistic Terminology, synthetic language is "a language in which the grammatical relationships of words are expressed chiefly through inflections that unite long strings of bound forms into single words, and several concepts are put together into one word am-a-b-o-r (I shall be loved)."

Pei defines analytical language as a "language in which auxiliary words are the chief means of indicating grammatical relationship, to the total or partial exclusion of inflections, and where the separate meanings are expressed by words that can be used in isolation (free morphemes). (English I shall wait, when I expresses the notion of first person singular, shall expresses futurity and wait conveys the basic idea of the action, as contrasted with Latin amabo, when ama - conveys the basic idea, -b- expresses futurity, -o- expresses first person singular)."

Modern English is an analytic language; Old English, a synthetic language. In its grammar Old English resembles modern German. Theoretically the noun and adjective are inflected for four cases in the singular and four in the plural, although the forms are not always distinctive; in addition, the adjective has separate forms of each of the three genders. There are distinctive endings for the different persons, numbers, tenses, and moods even though the inflection of the verb is less elaborate than that of the Latin verb. It is apparent that the inflection of the noun was much more elaborate in Old English than it is today.

In Modern English, however, the subject and the object do not have distinctive forms; we make use of a fixed order of words. It makes a great deal of difference in English whether we say Amanda killed Donella or Donella Killed Amanda. Languages which make extensive use of prepositions and auxiliary verbs and depend upon word order to show other relationships are known as analytic languages.

We live in changing times. The maturing of our society, the scientific bent of our contemporary thought, and the advent of mass education in our schools are producing changes in our public, in our students, and in ourselves. Language may well be the most constant element in a society; yet it is as varied and mutable as life itself. English could not stand still, even if it wanted to. Ours, then, is the age-old problem of any institution: that of trying to hold on to traditional values while adapting to new situations.

THE CHRISTIAN CONVERSION OF ENGLAND

When Gregory, who was to become the Great, was a young deacon in Rome, he had noted the white bodies, the fair faces, and the golden hair of some youths who stood bound in the market-place.

"From what country do these slaves come?" he asked the traders who brought them.

"They are English, Angles!" the slave dealers answered.

"Not Angles, but angels," he said, "with faces so angel-like! And what is the name of their king?"

"Aella." they told him.

"Alle-luia shall be sung there," he cried, and passed on, musing how the angel-faces could be brought to sing it.

Years later when he had become Bishop of Rome, he sent Augustine, a Roman abbot, with a band of monks to preach the Gospel to the English people. These missionaries arrived in 597, and were received by the king who listened through an interpreter to a long sermon by Augustine; and though he refused to forsake his own religion, he promised shelter and protection to the strangers. "The band of monks entered Canterbury bearing before them a silver cross with a picture of Christ, singing in concert the litany of their Church.

"'Strangers from Rome' was the title with which the missionaries first fronted the English king. The march of the monks as they chanted their solemn litany was, in one sense, the return of the Roman legions who had retired at the trumpet call of Alaric in 411 when Italy was threatened by the Goths." *The Romans planned to return when the danger was over, but the moment never came, and the land was invaded by English pirates from Jutland in 449. There followed two centuries of bitter warfare during which the Britons were exterminated. When the conquest was completed Britain had become England, a land of Englishmen and not of Britons. In Britain Rome died in a vague tradition of the past. All remnants of the Roman world were swept away.* "The whole organization of government disappeared with the people who used it; its law, its literature, its manners, its faith went with it. The new England was a heathen country."

With the coming of Augustine, Canterbury, the earliest royal city of the now German England, became the center of Latin influence. "The Latin tongue again became one of the tongues of Britain, the language of its worship, its correspondence, its literature." *But* more than the tongue of Rome returned with Augustine; his landing renewed union with the Western World, and the new England was admitted to the commonwealth of European nations. Civilization, art, and letters returned with the Christian faith; and Roman law, which had never taken root in England, greatly influenced the code of English law which the missionaries began to put into writing soon after their arrival.

A year later when Aethelberht yielded to conversion, the new faith advanced rapidly, and Kentishmen crowded to baptism by the thousands. But the old heathen faith was not to fall without a struggle, and even in Kent reaction against the new creed began with the death of Aethelberht, for the Roman Church in Canterbury shrank before the heathen movement. "While the vigor of Christianity in Italy, Gaul, and Spain was exhausted in a bare struggle for life, Ireland, which remained unscourged by the invaders, drew from its conversion an energy such as it had never known before" Christianity had been received there with a burst of popular enthusiasm, and letters and art sprang up rapidly in its train. The new Christian life could not be confined within the bounds of Ireland. Its first missionary, Saint Patrick had not been dead half a century when upon the heathen reaction in Kent, the Church of Ireland with its missionaries came to replace the Church of Rome.

Heathen forces led by Penda conquered East Anglia, and during his long reign he waged continuous battle with the Cross. In 642, at the battle of Maserfeld, he defeated and slew Oswald, the king of Northumbria, who had led Christian forces to free East Anglia from Penda. But in 655 Oswi, sovereign of all Northumbria, met and defeated the old man and his pagan host in a field by Leeds. Victory was claimed at last for the faith of Christ, and the cause of the old gods was lost forever.

The terrible struggle between heathendom and Christianity was at an end, and there followed a long and profound peace.

THE TEUTONIC CONQUEST

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Germanic dwellers on the continental North Sea coast, from Denmark to Holland, were the original speakers of the Indo-European tongues from which the English language emerged. These Teutonic tribes spread out extensively and influenced many other languages as well.

In the fifth century, sometimes called the Germanic Century, the native Britons called upon the adventure-seeking Jutes to come to their land to help defend them against the barbarous Picts and Scots. The mercenaries from Jutland liked the land they had come to protect, and they remained to conquer and colonize. These "protectors," impressed by the fertile land of the islands, were quick to ask their relatives and tribesmen to come for settlement.

Next came the Angles and Saxons to ravage and settle, bringing with them the foundation of the English language. While this process of conquest went on until near the end of the sixth century, there was comparatively little intermingling with these three Teutonic groups and their Celtic predecessors.

The tongues or mixture of languages spoken by these Germanic groups were very closely related, but it was the last group to arrive, the Angles, that gave the words Anglalond, Engleland, and finally England to their new found land. Actually, however, the Jutes, Angles, and Saxons contributed in almost equal measure to the English language of today. Full impact of these conquests is evident in a comment made in 1605 by William Camden, an Englishman, that the Germanic tribes were responsible for alteration of laws, language, and attire.

This language, which was said to be sufficient to express any idea without borrowing from any other language, had many characteristics which typify the Indo-European languages. Some of these are still evidenced in varying degrees in modern English. These are the distinguishing characteristics traceable to the Teutonic beginnings: (a) the development of a weak verb conjugation along with the strong, (b) a twofold declension (strong and weak) of adjectives, (c) a fixed stress accent, (d) a regular shifting of consonants, (e) a tendency to slur and frequently to drop altogether the unstressed vowels.

There are other evidences that English has an Indo-European origin. These include the structure of nouns and the initial, internal, and final inflections of words. Grammatical aspects of case, number, gender, person, voice, tense, and mood are the more common inflections.

While English vocabulary has been enriched with words from many other languages, the sign-words are almost entirely of Germanic origin. Speakers of English today could not begin to communicate in their language without using these Germanic elements. Prepositions and conjunctions which bind a sentence together are traceable to the Teutonic languages. Articles, auxiliaries, pronouns, and demonstrative adjectives as well as numerals are Germanic. About 60 per cent of the entries of an unabridged dictionary are from other derivations, but an analysis of an ordinary paragraph of English would show that 80 to 85 per cent of the words are Germanic in origin.

Additions from other languages have made English a colorful language, but its element of simplicity compared to many other languages is a heritage from the Anglo-Saxons. The words describing simple, essential elements of human existence such as man, wife, child, meat, eat, sleep, drink, live, and fight are from these Teutonic invaders.

Although English has changed radically in its form and structure, it remains basically a Germanic tongue. As a result of the Teutonic conquests, the course of Britain's language and literature was changed.

MORE ABOUT THE TEUTONIC CONQUEST

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If our heritage of Anglo-Saxon were suddenly lost, a complete English sentence (even from the teacher) would be a rarity. While dictionary words (nouns, verbs, and adjectives) show a preponderance of Latin derivatives, sign words (such as prepositions, conjunctions, auxiliaries, articles, and suffixes) are overwhelmingly Anglo-Saxon. Indeed, most of our everyday words -- man, house, sun, moon, food, child -- are Anglo-Saxon. The first words a child learns -- mother, father, brother, home, love -- are Anglo-Saxon; and when under the stress of great emotion, he turns again and again to these words.

Who are the Anglo-Saxons? Why have they so greatly influenced our language?

When hordes of barbarians, driven by Huns, began to storm the gates of the Roman world, the Roman legions were withdrawn from Britain to defend the heart of their empire. Teutonic tribes from western Germany and the Jutland peninsula proceeded to Britain in small forays for the first half of the fifth century. The Saxons, the Frisians, the Jutes, and the Angles were interested not only in plundering but in colonization. In 449, a British chieftain offered the Jutes land and pay for aid against the Irish and the Picts. The Jutes complied, but they also evicted their hosts. Encouraged by this success, more Teutonic invaders drove the Celts into Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany.

The Teutonic tribes of the seven kingdoms which emerged were rather homogeneous in speech. By 700 the language of the land was called Englisc, and by 1000 the country was Englaland (land of the Angles). Note the shift of the a to e which is related to the shift from Frankish to French or from man to men. The language of the Teutonic invaders replaced Latin, and only a few place names (such as Thames and Avon) remained to show the old Celtic influence.

THE VIKING AGE

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Historians designate the middle of the eighth century through the beginning of the eleventh century as the Viking Age. It was at this time that the Vikings, a seafaring people from Scandinavia, who were also called Northmen, Norsemen, and Danes, invaded, attacked, and ravaged the coast of England, thus leaving their mark on English life and English language.

The inauguration of the Viking Age is thought to have been about 787 A.D. Legend has it that at that time three ships with their single square sails and their long oars landed on the southern coast of England. They were manned by bearded men armed with round shields and spears and double-edged swords. After plundering and looting a town, these early Vikings sailed back to Scandinavia. Instances of these early raids, by these small bands, included the raiding of the wealthy monasteries of Lindisfarne and Jarrow. Each spring the Vikings descended again and again, for they soon discovered that the monastery coffers were replenished after each raid.

In the second era of the Viking Age, which was about 850, they came in great fleets of 200 to 400 ships. This time they came with the intention of staying. They raided London, Canterbury, and the surrounding country. Finally, these Vikings were defeated by a West Saxon Army, but they came back with renewed attacks. When Edmund, the East Anglian king, died a martyr's death, the eastern part of England fell into their hands; as a result, the Danes turned their attention to Wessex.

A short time later, however, King Alfred the Great ascended the throne of Wessex. Under his leadership the English armies scored a final victory over the Danes; and the Danes, under the leadership of Guthrum, withdrew from Wessex. The Treaty of Wedmore, which was signed by Alfred and Guthrum in 886, specified that the Danes were to occupy territory referred to as Danelaw. The boundary ran roughly from Chester to London and to the east. By this treaty, the Danes agreed to accept Christianity, which had become a facet of English life in the fourth century.

The third and last stage of the invasions came during the period from 878 to 1042. Alfred was followed by his son, Edward the Elder; his grandson, Athelstan; Edred; and Edgar, the Peaceful. These leaders temporarily staved off defeat. Eventually, however, *they could not control the enemy, and once again the Danes successfully pillaged English villages. Finally Svein succeeded in driving Ethelred, the English king, into exile and becoming King of England. After his death more fighting occurred and a new Danish king, Canute (1016-1035), gained the throne, and for a twenty-five year period England was ruled by a Danish king.*

A study of the history reveals that many of the invaders chose to settle in England. As a result, there was considerable Scandinavian influence on the English language as evidenced by the large number of Scandinavian elements now found in English.

According to Albert Baugh, there is a decided similarity between Old English and the language spoken by the Scandinavian invaders. For instance, there are similarities of certain sounds, such as the development of the sound sk, which was palatized to the Scandinavian sound sh in modern English. Other examples are evident in this excerpt from History of the English Language by A. C. Baugh:

> **The Old English scyrte has become shirt .... Occasionally, for example, the Teutonic diphthong ai became a in Old English, but became ei or e in Old Scandinavian. Such tests as these, based on sound-development in the two languages are the most reliable means of distinguishing Scandinavian from native words.**

Among the most notable evidences of the Scandinavian settlement in England are the proper nouns. Baugh states that some three hundred names like Althorp, Bishopsthorpe, and Linthorpe contain the Scandinavian word thorp, meaning village.

Early in the Danish period there were very few common nouns in existence which were directly traceable to the Scandinavian influence. This limited influence is explained by the hostile relations which existed between the Anglo-Saxons and the Scandinavians which eliminated much social intercourse.

It was after the Danes had settled down and begun to live peaceably with the English that Scandinavian words began to appear in large numbers. These words made up the lay vernacular of that day. Among the nouns are band, bank, booth, leg, score, window, and trust. Some of the adjectives are low, meek, muggy, rotten, sly, tattered, and weak. A few of the verbs are call, crane, ransack, rake, scowl, thrive, and screech.

It is difficult to estimate the extent of the Scandinavian influence on the English language. Most of the loan words designate common everyday things and fundamental concepts. Included in this group are words which were influenced by Scandinavian forms and entire words of direct Scandinavian origin.

MORE ABOUT

THE VIKING AGE

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The adventurous Vikings enjoyed wars and fights. Their swift, high-prowed ships were controlled by skillful and daring seamanship. They possessed qualities of intelligence and imagination, quickly learning from the more civilized people they attacked.

The Danes were slower than the Norwegian Vikings in starting attacks on England; however, their greater number and their organizations made them a more serious menace to England.

In the first stage of the attacks, the Danes came down the English Channel to Wessex and Northern France. The armies of Wessex beat the Danes in battle but were unable to keep them from landing and looting. The attacks along the southern coast were followed by raids on East Anglia, Rochester, and Mercian London. In 850, the Danes encamped and wintered in Thanet, and the following year they defeated Canterbury and London. If a single village tried to defend itself, the result was usually massacre or enslavement of its people.

In 876 the Viking Halfdan divided Yorkshire and Northeast Mercia among his followers, thus causing Danish law and land-tenure to be introduced in these districts. After these settlements and Guthrum's retreat to East Anglia after Alfred defeated him, a change occurred in the Viking story; the roving war bands became landowners and farmers concerned more with the safety of their possessions than with the wrecking of others'.

Throughout this "Danelaw" period, similarities of language and ways of life produced a mixture of cultures through intermarriage and Danish conversion to Christianity. In the Danish settlements, however, the Danish laws and customs primarily prevailed and Danish place-names with -caster, -wick, -by, and -thorpe replaced many of the English forms.

Late in the tenth century, another series of raids by the mainland Danes resulted in the plunder of Chester, Southampton, Thanet, Cornwall, and others. Each summer they collected a Danegeld, a tax levied against the English for protection. During this period, it is interesting to note that these new raiders were greatly disliked by the Vikings living in England and that the two groups considered themselves enemies.

Following this final period of raids, a Viking named Cnut upheld the English law and sent English churchmen and craftsmen to civilize his other kingdoms, thus unifying the English and the Danes.

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE DANES IN ENGLAND

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Of all the invading groups that came to the shores of Britain the Danes were perhaps the most difficult to deal with. Because of their restlessness and their extra endowment of predatory energy they became known as the "pagan destroyers."

At first the attacks of the Danes upon England were hit-and-run raids continuing at intervals, according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, from 787 until about 850. The Viking method was to land quickly, pillage, and immediately withdraw. The sacking of Lindisfarne and Jarrow in 793 and 794 destroyed Northumbria as a center of learning and literature. Later, large armies and a Danish fleet of 350 ships captured Canterbury and London and scavaged the surrounding country. As a result, a treaty which defined the territory the Danes might inhabit was signed by King Alfred and Guthrum, the Danish leader. Because that territory was subject to Danish law, it was called Danelaw. Near the end of the century new Danish invasions began, and soon the invaders were being bribed by large sums to refrain from plundering. Finally Canute, the King of Denmark, who was determined to become King of England himself, seized the English throne after driving Ethelred, the English king, into exile.

While many Danes came to England on plundering raids and returned to their homes, many others settled permanently in the territory known as the Danelaw. There can be little doubt that the interaction of the Danish and Anglo-Saxon language influenced the development of the Middle English language and consequently of Modern English.

A map of England shows many place names ending in by, a Danish word meaning "farm" or "town." Whitby and Rugby are among the commonly known. Some three hundred words like Althorp, Linthorp, and Woodthrop contain the Danish word thorp, meaning village. Probably more than 1400 Scandinavian place names have been counted in England. Family names ending in son as in Johnson, Wilson, and Stevenson conform to Danish custom as do the names Fish and Fisk.

The Danes left their mark on local government and law also. Many legal terms were taken over by the English quite early but were displaced after the Norman conquest. However, the words law, outlaw, by-law, and hustings are Danish words that survive in Modern English.

The Danish invasions were not like the introduction to Christianity which brought the English into contact with new things, both spiritual and physical. The civilization of the invaders was somewhat similar to that of the English though perhaps inferior to it. Therefore the words that made their way into the English language were those which entered through the give and take of everyday living. Among the nouns are axle-tree, bank, band, bill, calf (of leg), egg, scrap, sister, skin, skirt, and steak. Among the adjectives are awkward, flat, ill, loose, meek, muggy, old, and tight. Many common verbs like to bait, bask, batten, call, clip, core, crave, egg (on), flit, take, thrust come from the Danish language. The Danes also contributed to the English language the tendency to place the accent near the beginning of a word and to slur the syllables that followed.

Of the four major English dialects only the Midland persisted. While King Alfred in his West Saxon dialect tried to preserve all of the inflections, the Danes tended to drop them in speech; in addition, they had no literature to preserve them. Thus, as time passed, the more difficult dialects gave way to the simple Midland dialect, which was standardized by the great writers of a later period who printed their words in this dialect.

LITERATURE OF THE OLD ENGLISH PERIOD

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In view of the fact that Old English and the literature written before the Norman Conquest are almost totally foreign to modern readers, the choice of a translation greatly affects the reader's appreciation and understanding of the language. The best examples of the literature are *Beowulf,* the stirring folk epic of gusty moors, fierce beasts, and daring warriors; *The Seafarer;* a realistic poem concerning life at sea; and *Widsith,* the complaint of a wandering scop.

In each of these works, the Anglo-Saxon tendencies toward metaphoric word compounds -- *swan-road* for *sea* and *ring-giver* for *king* -- and toward simple, monosyllabic words -- *fork, shirt, bone, boat,* and *fire* -- lead the reader to understand the origins of his own early vocabulary, which he also utilizes in ordinary situations. The best translations, such as Clarence G. Child's rendering of *Beowulf,* include attempts at the establishment of the former simple, but poetic tone; without it, the emphasis on survival, nature, fate, and hardihood is lost.

Putting an Old English selection next to a modern translation enables the reader to experience for himself the immediacy and tension of the early writings, which have been lost with the present use of complex structure and subordination.

Finally, a short explanation of weak and strong verbs and their absorption into modern English will enable the reader to comprehend irregular grammar as an historic milestone, not just a nuisance. Some helpful examples are

drifan,	*draf,*	*drifon,*	*drifen*	(drive)
helpan,	*healp,*	*hulpon,*	*holpen*	(help)
ceosan,	*ceas,*	*curon,*	*coren*	(choose).

Also, comments on word compounds with Anglo-Saxon prefixes and suffixes, such as *-full, -nes, mis-,* and *with-* augment the reader's own vocabulary.

All in all, the study of Old English in translation and the perusal of a few lines of the original should provide adequate contrast for the study of Chaucer and Middle English. With this knowledge, the reader is better prepared to understand the flexibility of vocabulary and the strength of expression of the English language and also its multi-faceted development.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE OF THE OLD ENGLISH PERIOD TO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE OF THE MODERN ENGLISH PERIOD

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The English language as we know it today is very different from the English language of the year 45 B.C. The language was born in the minds of several ancient tribes and was brought together and changed and molded by generations of inquisitive minds.

Shakespeare spoke English, yet many modern English students find it very difficult to read and understand his poetry and plays. Why is this true? Obviously Shakespeare's English is different in many ways from the English that the modern student of today speaks.

Chaucer spoke English, yet the average English student of this generation cannot read Chaucer without help from some source. Just how do these changes come about? What makes a language change? One of the factors involved in the change, of course, is the constantly growing vocabulary. As new situations and events occur, new words are created to label them. New vocabulary words come out of every period in history. For example, the twentieth century can take credit for the word astronaut.

Another factor that contributes to change in language is the speech of prominent people. They may pronounce a word quite differently from the ordinary layman, but the layman will pick it up and perhaps even change the spelling to fit the way it sounds.

Even though there are often changes, nearly all the words in the English language today are imitations of words that are handed down from the previous generations.

Many of our English words are "borrowed" from other languages such as French or Latin. The word may be altered by changing a suffix or prefix, but the fact remains that the word came from a language other than our own.

The period of Old English was from the year 450 to the year 1150, a time when the endings of nouns, adjectives, and verbs were unimpaired and the words received full inflection. The language was not uniform as we know it today. There were four different dialects -- Northumbrian, Mercian, West Saxon, and Kentish -- spoken in four different places. Since most extant Old English literature was written in West Saxon, this, of course, is the one about which most is known.

Dr. A. C. Baugh says that in general the differences which are noticeable between Old and Modern English concern spelling and pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar.

One of the changes involving pronunciation concerns the long vowel, which is different in the two words stan and stone; yet both mean the same thing; one is Old English and the other is Modern English.

Dr. Baugh also states that Old English looks strange to the modern reader because of the differences in spelling. For instance, Old English made use of two characters to represent the sound of "th": þ and ð.

Another of the obvious differences between Old and Modern English is the lack of words derived from French or Latin which did not immediately enter the language.

FEATURES THAT CHARACTERIZE OLD ENGLISH

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In spite of the fact that Celtic was the first Indo-European language to be spoken in England, very few words in Old English except place-names can be traced directly to this source. Other languages also played a small role in the development of Old English. Latin--indirectly from the Teutonic invaders who had had contact with Latin in their homelands and more directly from the Roman occupation of Britain and the later Christian missionaries to England--made some impact upon Old English. So also did the native language of the Danish invaders, evidenced in the existence of some 1400 Scandianavian place-names in England.

Although these languages are in fact a part of Old English, their contribution to the language is largely a matter of vocabulary. The real basis for the grammar and a greater portion of the vocabulary of the language comes directly from the Teutonic tribes who invaded England around the year 449. These tribes -- the Angles and Jutes from the Danish peninsula and the Saxons from the section between the Rhine and Elbe Rivers -- provided the Low-West Teutonic dialects that are Old English.

According to Dr. A. C. Baugh, Old English very definitely shares the characteristics common to all the Teutonic languages: the shift of certain consonants (according to Grimm's Law); for example, the p shifts to f, thus pisces becomes fish; the weak as well as strong declension of adjectives; the regular verb conjugations; and a strong accent on the first or root syllable. During the period from 450-1150 the endings of the noun, the adjective, and the verb were preserved more or less unchanged; hence, this was called the period of full inflections.

Since the Teutonic tribes had various dialects, Old English was not a uniform language. Of the four distinguishable dialects in Anglo-Saxon times -- Northumbrian, Mercian, West Saxon, and Kentish -- the West Saxon became, in a manner of speaking, the standard speech of Anglo-Saxon England. This was true partly because it was the only dialect in which there was extensive writing done and partly because the West Saxon Kingdom attained greater political status than the others.

The Old English language, as it is known today, even when written in the modern alphabet instead of the runic alphabet of early England, seems almost a foreign language. Some of the characters are no longer a part of our alphabet, and there are other differences in spelling, pronunciation, and grammar.

The fact that the long vowels have been changed accounts for many of the differences in spelling and pronunciation. In reality, then, modern and Old English words are very closely related except for the differences in vowels; for example, bān becomes bone, fōt becomes foot, and fyr becomes fire.

Authorities agree that as far as grammar is concerned, Old English is a synthetic language, as contrasted to the analytic modern English. That is, it indicates the relations of words in a sentence by inflection rather than by the use of prepositions or word order. Nouns are inflected to show number, case, and gender. Often gender is completely illogical; for instance, sunne (sun) is feminine, mona (moon) is masculine, and maegden (girl) and wif (wife) are neuter.

In declining adjectives, one form is used for nouns with a definite article and another form for nouns without the article. The definite article is completely inflected for all genders and numbers.

Personal pronouns are inflected to show all genders, persons, and cases. In addition, there is a special pronoun to show two people or things.

Dr. Baugh, writing in A History of the English language, states that verb forms are simplified in Old English in contrast to the older Indo-European languages. Old English shows two simple tenses, present and past, and, except for one word, no inflectional forms for the passive.

In spite of the fact that the vocabulary of Old English was somewhat limited, the flexibility of the language did make possible adequate means of expression of ideas. This flexibility is evidenced in the extensive use of self-explaining compound words in the literature of the period, as in Beowulf, for example, and in the use of synonyms. Prefixes and suffixes were also used generously to form new words or extend root ideas.

Old English, then, is a rare blending of several languages and dialects; yet it is distinctively a language all its own. What this language would have become, had it not been changed drastically by the Norman Conquest, one can only conjecture. It would, in all probability, have retained the Teutonic flavor that gave way to the French influence.

THE NORMAN CONQUEST

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When the Normans conquered England, they brought their rulers, their way of life, and their language to flourish in foreign soil. No doubt fishermen on both coasts had long communicated and borrowed words, but the invaders imposed French as the official language. They set up a centralized government based on the feudal system; and the law of the land was written, spoken, and enforced in French.

Norman conquerors, given English soil as a reward for victory in battle, brought their families across the channel to set up estates. Many children grew up in a trilingual setting -- parents spoke French, churchmen conducted services in Latin, and servants communicated in English. Each language was definitely associated with a particular social class and gave evidence of the relationship of the English to their conquerors. Knights commonly spoke French; grooms commonly spoke English. Children grew up hearing two or more words to represent one object, and subtle semantics invaded the language. In Ivanhoe, Scott has Wamba to see that meat on the hoof bears English names -- cow, sheep, calf, pig, and deer -- but that meat on the table bears French names -- beef, mutton, veal, pork, and venison.

The English, regarded as crude inferiors, were not schooled; and writing in their own tongue almost disappeared for two hundred years. Any free man who learned to speak French and to ride was welcome to become a knight. Yeomen had to learn French if they wished to be ranked as gentlemen. But many a lowly Englishman continued to speak his language; and as long as a language is spoken, it survives.

By 1400 the language of the commoner had won out. There was but one language -- English. But English was never the same. French had enriched and expanded its vocabulary, adding delicate shades of meaning and soft sounds. Written English, revived by churchmen versed in French and Latin, was recorded as it was heard. In Old English hus was pronounced hoose. The French wrote the word hous which became house. Adjectives were used after the noun to enrich the mood and make shades of meaning possible.

In the early fourteenth century when universities passed regulations against speaking English, it was certain that more students were beginning to consider English a suitable language for the educated. In 1362 Parliament voted that law courts must try cases in the "mother tongue." For the first time since 1066 Parliament was held in English. The native language was reinstated.

Many French words continued to flood the language in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. From this period came *rule*, *serve*, *purity*, *religion*, *order*, and *changing*. The Old English *kingly*, *clothes*, and *gladness* were supplemented with the French *royal*, *dress*, and *joy*. A blending of the two languages produced an English that could be written with elegance and force. It enabled Englishmen to possess a language highly adaptable to poetry.

According to Mario Pei, language reflects the activities of the people who speak it. Thus English in these words reflects the aristocratic nature of the Normans -- *nobility*, *chivalry*, *gentility*, *royalty*, *mansion*, *madam*, *banquet*, *homage*, *tournament*, and *armor*. The English found it necessary to learn *pay*, *rule*, *judge*, *duty*, and *rent*. These activities and social customs developed an intricate language that today enables English speaking people to convey shades of meaning and depth of emotion.

THE EFFECT OF THE NORMAN CONQUEST ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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"If Harold, not William, had won at Hastings in 1066, I should be writing these words, and you would be reading them, not in English, but in Anglo-Saxon" (Morris Bishop, Horizon, Fall 1966). Thus does Morris Bishop succinctly state the effect of the Norman Conquest on the development of the English language. It is indeed a matter of record that this historical event completely altered England's language forever.

Vidon D. Scudder, writing in Introduction to the Study of the English Language, says that in the long run the Norman Conquest accelerated and stimulated, if indeed it did not create, the power of self-expression in England, and only a few Celtic words found their way into our modern speech. When the Normans conquered the Anglo-Saxons, just the opposite happened. The nobles, the ruling class, spoke French; the poorer, simpler people, Saxon. But as time went on, the lower class wanted to learn French, too, for convenience and social ambitions. They never succeeded in speaking pure French; they could not keep the two languages distinct as the nobles could. The rustics mixed the two vocabularies and two grammars, mistook the genders, assigned the neuter to all the words that did not designate beings with a sex; in fact, strange as it may seem, they are the ones who created the new language. They are the real founders of modern English.

However, what literature was produced in England -- poetry, history, romance, devotional works -- was not all set down in French during the twelfth century since the government, the military, the church and therefore education were all dominated by French-speaking Normans. Collier's Encyclopedia has called this period of time "the dangerous century" since it was during this period that English was actually threatened with complete extinction. But the language of the natives survived, and for three centuries following the Conquest, the literature of England was tri-lingual: French, Latin, and English.

Geoffrey Chaucer wrote his great works in English, but half the words he used were of Roman origin. In this he anticipated the future. Our present vocabulary is roughly half Germanic (English and Scandinavian) and half Romance (French and Latin).

The age in which Chaucer wrote marked a high tide in the flow of French words into English speech. In the period between 1250-1400, the year of Chaucer's death, an estimated 10,000 French words slid unobtrusively into English speech; of these 75 percent are still in common use today ("English," *Collier's Encyclopedia,* 1962, Vol. 9).

The major categories of loan words which early entered the language pertained to the church -- *prayer, clergy, savior;* government -- *defendant, judge;* art and architecture -- *cloister, palace;* pleasure -- *ease, dice, trump;* cooking -- *roast, pastry.*

In this category it is interesting to observe that words connoting such meat items as *beef, veal, mutton, pork, bacon* and *venison* are all French words, whereas the living animals from which they are derived (*ox, cow, calf, sheep, swine, boar, deer*) retain their English names. Equally provocative is the fact that *dinner* and *supper* are French words but *breakfast* is English. (Lincoln Barnett, *The Treasure of our Tongue,* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1964).

THE END OF THE FRENCH LANGUAGE IN ENGLAND

The French language was in common use in England almost through the reign of Edward III. French was the language which the children of gentlemen were taught from their cradle, and it was the only language allowed to be used by boys at school. Even the country people understood it and occasionally spoke it. However, by 1367 public feeling had already begun to set in against its use. A few years before this, in 1362, a statute was passed ordaining that all pleas in the king's court should be pleaded in the English language and then entered and enrolled in Latin. Up until then all pleadings and oral arguments had been in French with the enrollments being sometimes recorded in French and sometimes in Latin.

Among reasons given for the change were: people in court often had no knowledge or understanding of what was said for them or against them by their sergeants or other pleaders, people would better understand the laws and customs if they were spoken of in the language of the realm, and people might better govern themselves without offending the law, better keep, save and defend their heritage and possessions if their laws and customs were learned and used in the tongue of the country.

THE EFFECT OF THE BLACK DEATH AND THE PEASANTS' REVOLT UPON THE LANGUAGE

During the lifetime of Geoffrey Chaucer there occurred in England two related events of such momentous importance that their effects had ultimately significant influences upon the future course of the English language.

Until 1349 the common man or serf under the manorial system was dependent upon and bound to the soil on which he had been born. He was not only a restricted tenant, he was the property of the land-owner. Near the close of the year 1348 there swooped down upon Britain the most terrible plague the world had ever witnessed. It had swept out of the East and had devastated Europe from the shores of the Mediterranean to the shores of the Baltic Sea. The accounts of its destructiveness are legendary. J. R. Green writes of it: **"Of the three or four millions who then formed the population of England more than one-half were swept away in its repeated visitations. Its ravages were fiercest in the greater towns, where filthy and undrained streets afforded a constant haunt to leprosy and fever. In the burial ground which the piety of Sir Walter Manny purchased for the citizens of London, more than fifty thousand corpses are said to have been interred. But the Black Death fell on the village almost as fiercely as on the town. More than half the priests of Yorkshire are known to have perished,"** *and in the diocese of Norwich two thirds of the parishes were left without survivors. The whole organization of fuedal labor was thrown out of gear. Manors were left without owners and bound tenants of those manors who had miraculously escaped the plague found themselves labor free to migrate at will. Cultivation without their services was impossible; harvests rotted on the ground and fields were left untilled. Consequently, often no questions were asked when one of these migrants appeared and asked for work. Many serfs found themselves for the first time masters of the labor market. This new access to a wider freedom gave opportunity to labor for the first time in history to sew seeds of social revolt. This was the first breath of defiance against the tyranny of property that was to blow down the whole feudal system; and this defiance was later to manifest itself in the Peasants' Revolt which began in 1377.*

Edward the Third had died in dishonored old age; the French war had ended in disaster for England. The Spaniards had beaten one English fleet, and a storm had sunk another. England was in disappointment and on the brink of financial ruin. To defray the costs of these failures, Parliament granted a fresh subsidy to be *raised by a poll tax to be levied on every man in the realm. To this tax the poorest was to contribute a sum equal to that of the wealthiest. This gross injustice set all England afire.* "In the eastern counties crowds of peasants gathered together, armed with clubs, rusty swords, and bows; the royal commissioners sent to repress the tumult were driven from the field, and a party of insurgents in Essex crossed the Thames under Jack Straw and called Kent to arms. The town of Canterbury threw open its gates, and the archbishop's palace was plundered. The revolt soon spread over all England south of the Thames." *The peasants longed for a right rule, for plain and simple justice. They showed their scorn for the immorality of the nobles and the infamy of the court. The revolt spread like wildfire; Norfolk and Suffolk, Cambridge and Hertfordshire rose in arms. The peasants marched on London, put every lawyer who fell into their hands to death; shouted as they fired the houses of stewards and flung the records of the manor-courts into the flames. They dragged Archbishop Sudbury from his sanctuary and beheaded him on Tower Hill, and they wreaked the same vengeance on the chief commissioner who levied the poll tax. The young king, sixteen year old Richard, spoke to them, appeased them, acceded to their demands, and promised them amnesty. But later the death of their leader, Wat Tyler, robbed them of action and left them without a leader. The courage of the nobles rose,* "and the king with an army of 40,000 men spread terror by the ruthlessness of his executions as he marched in triumph through Kent and Essex." *The King's promises, grants, and letters were declared legally null and void, and the serfs were temporarily returned to their servitude. But they had demonstrated their power and now gave promise that they would fulfill their destiny to become a part of the rising middle class. Their language, which was simple English, would become someday the only language of the land.*

WILLIAM CAXTON AND THE PRINTING PRESS

William Caxton, a Kentish boy by birth, spent thirty years of his early manhood in Flanders where he was employed as a copyist and where from Colard Mansion he learned the art of printing which he was the first to introduce into England.

In his preface to his first printed work Tales of Troy *he wrote:* "I have practiced and learned at great charge and dispense to ordain this book in print after the manner and form as ye may see, and it is not written with pen and ink as other books be, to the end that every man may have them at once, for all the books of this story here emprynted as ye see were begun in one day and also finished in one day."

Caxton was a practical man of business who operated his press as a commercial enterprise to earn his livelihood, but he was also a lover of the language and a lover of poetry, for he printed all the English poetry of any worth that was then in existence. His reverence for Geoffrey Chaucer who he thought ought to be eternally remembered is shown in the pure text of the Canterbury Tales *which he printed and reprinted.*

Busy as he was with his press he was even busier as a translator. More than four thousand of his printed pages are the work of his own translation. These are important because they show the drift of the popular literature of his time, and they are important as indicators of the changing styles and forms of the English language which break out in his curious prefaces. His work of translation involved a choice of English which makes him an important figure in the history of our language. He stood between two schools of thought -- French affectation and English pedantry. It was a time when the character of our literary tongue was being settled, and there was a struggle going on in which he played a prominent part. In this regard he wrote: "Some honest and good clerks (scholars) have been with me and desired me to write the most curious terms I could find, and yet some other gentlemen of late blamed me, saying that in my translations I had over curious terms which could not be understood of commonpeople, and desired me to use old and homely terms in my translations." *He went on to state that he would like to please every man but that his own taste went to plain English and to terms that were common in daily use. However, it was not easy to adopt an English that was generally acceptable because even the speech of common talk was in a state of rapid change. Of it Caxton said:* "Our language now used varieth far from that which was used and spoken when I was born. Not only so but the tongue of each shire was still peculiar to itself, and hardly intelligible to men of another county."

He was still busy translating when he died and still making his contribution to the development and refinement of our language.

THE UNIVERSITIES AND OUR LANGUAGE

As nurturing places of its poets and its statesmen, the great universities of England have made significant contributions to the growth and beauty of the English language. Of the early history of Cambridge little or nothing is known, but it is easy to trace the early steps by which Oxford attained intellectual eminence Through the Crusades, Englishmen and Europeans had gained impulse from contact with the more civilized East, and in this wake great schools that bore the name of universities sprung up throughout Europe. Moved by a spirit of intellectual restlessness, inquiry, and impatience, wandering teachers taught thousands of young scholars in these new centers of learning, and a power that was not to be denied arose in a world that was straining to break the restraining bonds of medieval feudalism.

At the time, Oxford ranked among the most important of English towns. It strategically commanded the river valley along which flowed the commerce of Southern England; it contained within its walls an abbey and a priory that gave it certain ecclesiastical dignity; it boasted the castle of an earl; and without its walls there was a palace that was frequently visited by the king. That it was the meeting place of many important parliaments testifies to its political importance. In the heart of the town was one of the wealthiest Jewries in England that promoted and financed its trade. Its townspeople were proud of a liberty that rivalled even that of London. It was a notable example of a town that had prospered at the hands of its Norman masters. Yet at this time it did not fully value what was to become its proudest possession -- its university.

Of it J. R. Green writes in his A Short History of the English People: "But to realize this Oxford of the past, we must dismiss from our minds all recollections of the Oxford of the present" for there was nothing of the pomp that over-awes a freshman of today. "Instead of long fronts of venerable colleges, of stately walks beneath immemorial elms, history plunges us into the mean and filthy lanes of a medieval town. Thousands of boys, huddled in bare lodging-houses, clustering around teachers poor as themselves in church porch and house porch, drinking, quarrelling, dicing, begging at corners of the streets, take the place of the brightly-colored train of doctors and heads. Mayor and chancellor struggle in vain to enforce order or peace on this seething mass of turbulent life. The retainers who follow their young lords to the University fight out the feuds of the houses in the streets. Scholars from Kent and scholars from Scotland wage the bitter struggle of the North and South. At nightfall roysterer and reveller roam with torches through the narrow lanes, defying baliffs and cutting down burgers at their doors. Now a mob of clerks plunges into the Jewry, and wipes off the memory of bills and bonds by sacking a Hebrew house or two. Now a tavern row between scholar and townsman widens into a general broil, and the academic bell of St. Mary's vies with the town bell of St. Martin's in clanging to arms. Every phase of ecclesiastical controversy or political strife is preluded by some fierce outbreak in this turbulent, surging mob. 'When Oxford draws knife,' runs the old rhyme, 'England's soon at strife'."

But this turbulence was the turbulence of a new order that threatened the feudal and ecclesiastical orders of the medieval world. Feudalism rested on local isolation, on separation of kingdom from kingdom, on distinction of blood, on supremacy of force, on accidents of place and social position. The university was a protest against these precepts. Its common language, Latin, superseded the warring tongues of Europe; and a common intellectual kinship and rivalry supplanted the strifes which parted realm from realm. The universities succeeded in doing what the Church and Empire had failed to do -- bring together into one commonwealth the Christian nations of the West.

Under the discipline of Oxford the Northerner and the Southerner who had long been feuding were brought face to face, and natural isolationism was held in check by the larger comprehensiveness of the University, where society and government were wholly democratic. All students mingled in the lecture halls; the son of the nobleman stood on the same footing with the poorest commoner. Wealth, physical strength, and noble ancestry went for nothing alongside academic achievement. The University was absolutely self-governed and admitted its citizens soley on intellectual competency. Knowledge made one a master in an intellectual aristocracy where all were entitled to equality. All had equal right to counsel, and all had right to vote in the determination of any final decision. Both treasury and library were at the disposal of the body of masters that named every officer and proposed every statute. Even the chancellor, their head, was elected by them.

As the democratic spirit of the University threatened the system of fuedalism, its spirit of intellectual curiosity threatened the Church. During the Middle Ages the whole process of the educated world was under the control of the clergy; scholars and teachers alike were free from lay responsibilities and subject not to the rule of civil tribunals but to the rule of the Bishop and his spiritual courts. The chancellor himself was essentially an ecclesiastical figure appointed by the Bishop of Lincoln in whose diocese the university was then located. But now the sudden expansion of education diminished the importance of theological studies which had been almost the entire curriculum. The revival of interest in classical literature, the rediscovery of an older and greater world, the contact with a freer life in society and in politics introduced a spirit of doubt that questioned the realms of unquestioning belief. A growing interest in physical science which had so long been crushed by the Church now brought Christians into contact with the Moslem and the Jew.

Scientific teaching at Oxford is best exemplified by Roger Bacon whose life almost covers the thirteenth century. During his latter years, he produced the Annus Mirabilis in which he gathered together all the knowledge of his time on every branch of science and suggested improvements in everyone of them. He dealt scientifically with grammar, geography, chronology, hydrography, and astrology. He included all physical sciences of his time under the name of mathematics and wrote: "For he who knows not mathematics cannot know any other sciences and what is more he cannot discover his own ignorance or find its proper remedies." *He made optics his own special study and explored the anatomy of the eye. Bacon found little recognition for his work and finally had prison for his reward.* "It has been reserved for later ages to roll away the obscurity that gathered round his memory, and to place first in the great roll of modern science the name of Roger Bacon." -- *one time student of grammar and teacher at Oxford University.*

MIDDLE ENGLISH AND MODERN ENGLISH

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

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One must realize at the beginning that what we are calling Middle English is really a group of four major dialects -- Northern, Southern, East Midland, and West Midland -- and that we are covering a time period of approximately three hundred and fifty years (1150-1500). By the end of the period, one of the dialects, the East Midland, had become what is essentially Modern English.

Middle English thus is something of a bridging period between Old English and Modern English, and the changes which took place within the period are in a sense more important than those which took place later. These changes occurred both in grammar and vocabulary, and it is impossible to say which area saw the greatest change.

In the field of grammar what had been a highly inflected language underwent a great decay of inflectional endings. Noun endings which had indicated number and case were lost to the extent that the -s *alone remained as the usual indication. The adjective became an uninflected word as it is today. The change in both cases was due in large part to altered pronunciation which had weakened the final syllables and made the endings useless, at least in speech. The pronoun also became a relatively uninflected form, though not as a result of pronunciation changes. There was some leveling of inflections and weakening of endings with verbs; but the major changes were the losses among the strong verbs some of which died out completely while others, by the principle of analogy, became weak. By the close of the period, another important change had occurred in the loss of grammatical gender. Gender today in English is determined solely by sex.*

In vocabulary there was an influx of words from the French which has continued to the present day. There was some curtailment in the process of word formation with certain prefixes and suffixes, but the process still continues to a certain extent as does the process of forming self-explaining compounds. The vocabulary was further enriched by the addition of words from Latin and from the languages of the Low Countries. Vocabulary today is consistently enriched in like manner by borrowings from nations with whom we are in contact.

In short, the question of how similar or how different Middle English and Modern English are rests upon what period of Middle English is being considered. With Early Middle English the differences are far more obvious than with late. The differences between the various dialects are also important.

For the reader interested in pursuing the subject, any good history of the English language will be valuable. A. C. Baugh's *A History of the English Language* *contains a clear and interesting discussion. Reading from one of the literary works of the period, such as Chaucer's* *Canterbury Tales,* *can also be fruitful.*

FEATURES THAT CHARACTERIZE MIDDLE ENGLISH

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As nearly as periods can be dated, the Middle English period is from 1100 to 1500. Chaucer, however, who lived in the fourteenth century, would have found twentieth century English more understandable than eleventh century English. And while we can read Shakespeare with little difficulty and Chaucer with no great difficulty, we find Beowulf almost indecipherable. There were, then, many influences and great changes in the Middle English period.

The Norman Conquest destroyed the Anglo-Saxon upper classes and hastened the breakdown of their language. English then was the language of the common people; Latin and French were the languages of the church, and French was the language of government.

Vocabulary borrowings from the French occurred not only in government and religion but in other areas as well; one-fifth of the English words pertaining to art and science are French in origin. There were also Norse borrowings of proper names, place names, and common words. However, the Scandinavian influence on syntax is slight except for the occurrence of a preposition at the end of a sentence. The Germanic influence upon English is clear because, while Old English depended upon inflectional devices, Middle English depended upon stress and word order.

By 1300, a composite, but true, English was being used. The major dialects had been Northern, East and West Midland, Southern or West Saxon, and Kentish. Gradually London English which had largely accommodated its neighbors, the Southern Midland Areas, especially the West, including Oxford, became dominant. This London English, established between 1350 and 1380, was important politically with the crowning of the first king since the Conquest whose native tongue was English. It was furthered in literature by Chaucer and his followers. It replaced French in the courts and schools and was used by Caxton, the first English printer.

There are many difficulties in trying to be too exact in a discussion of Middle English characteristics, especially as related to time and place. There are variations in writing and in dialect. Touchstones for the identification of dialects are rare. Place names, however, have helped to identify origins, as well as changes within a dialect. The experiments of the scribes in writing forms tend to confuse us as to real language changes, but the consistency gained by the Northern scribes' adoption of symbols and graphic devices is helpful.

During the Middle English period a leveling of the old distinctions of the inflectional system of articles, nouns, and plural forms took place as a result of the English tendency to obscure vowels in unstressed positions and to shift accent to the first syllable. The strong vocalic alternation of "sing--sang--sung" has been replaced most often by a weaker suffix as in "flow--flowed." The disappearance of the final inflectional e in this period was to have a long reaching effect on metrical composition. Grammatical gender was gone. There were new diphthongs and the lengthening of vowels. The Old English a became rounded and acquired a sound written o or oa, as the a in saw. Characteristic endings in this period are s, en, eth. The confusion, again, from fresh borrowings of words at the close of the period is mentioned by Caxton, and it led to Tyndale's glossary.

From this period then in language, we can identify a basically Germanic structure while the heart of vocabulary construction is English in such recurring words as prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns, auxiliaries and commonly employed nouns, adjectives, and verbs. French vocabulary introductions are all pervasive, giving English its mixed characteristic.

THE LITERARY LANGUAGE OF THE RENAISSANCE

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Among the many concepts or meanings of the term "Renaissance" is a movement through which the literary languages of the various European peoples finally shook off Latin and became somewhat standardized. In England this revival of learning made itself felt in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge and helped to awaken an appetite for the beauties of literature. With the flowering of literature came a parallel flowering of the English language. In addition to borrowing from the Romance languages, writers found the need to coin new words for literary purposes. Thus, the new formations from native materials were due to the efforts of individual Renaissance writers and their associates, who gave to the English language innumerable words.

The great vogue for poetry brought in poetical innovations of several kinds such as poem, ode, elegy, and satire; however, the poets were more given to the revival of old words like astound, blameful, and doom. The poetical vocabulary was greatly increased by Sir Phillip Sidney, Sir Thomas Wyatt, and especially Sir Edmund Spenser to whom the language owes such useful words as belt, forthright, glee, glance, birthright, endear, shady, wary, gaudy, gloomy, and merriment, among others. A number of the revived words, along with several new ones, are seen in Spenser's The Faerie Queene, Wyatt's Tottel's Miscellany, and Phillip Sidney's Arcadia.

Popularity of the drama also contributed to the development of the English language. Macbeth, by William Shakespeare, introduced several words and phrases to the growing language. Some of the words and phrases are multitudinous, incarnadine, and the milk of human kindness. Other instances of words introduced by Shakespeare are agile, allurement, antipathy, catastrophe, critical, dire, demonstrate, emulate, hereditary, modest, and emphasis.

Similarly, the prose writers of the Renaissance contributed to the English language words which were more original than those added by the poets and which are their own innovations. Foremost among those who contributed during the Renaissance were Sir Thomas Elyot, Sir Thomas More, John Lyly, and Sir Thomas Malory. More's Utopia (1516) and Lyly's Euphues (1579) include many words which had not been used in the English language previously. A number of these words were euphuism from Lyly; absurdity, acceptance, anticipate, combustible, comprehensible, exaggerate, exasperate, paradox, and congratulatory from More; and analogy, beneficence, exhaust, encyclopedia, and frugality from Thomas Elyot.

Literature during the Renaissance not only introduced new words into the language, but it also kept alive the principle of English word-formation, which through the passage of time has brought about greater development of a new but effective language.

ENGLISH AND THE CLASSICAL LANGUAGES

Through Italy and France the influence of the Renaissance upon our language came to be felt in England as early as the fourteenth century. The most important loan words to enter English from the classical languages came by way of Latin. Although the influence of these languages was felt all over Europe, it was,with the possible exception of French, felt more strongly in English than in any other language.

A Germanic language, and English is basically Germanic, has a natural resistance against alien intruders, but that resistance had been broken earlier by the wholesale importation of words by the Norman French. These paved the way for the Latin words which they resemble in many respects and encouraged English minds to shrink from coining new words out of native material. As a consequence, we have now in the English vocabulary about one in every five words found in the Latin lexicon.

If the French words were more elite than English ones, Latin words were even more so, and they seemed to enrich a language that appeared poor when compared to the rich storehouses of Latin and Greek.

One may wonder whether the wholesale adoption of Latin and Greek words has been wholely beneficial to the English tongue or whether it would have been better if adoption of words from the classical languages had been kept within much narrower limits. It has been said that "real wealth is wealth of ideas and not wealth of words," and that "we have more words than notions, half a dozen words for the same thing" for words are not material things that can be heaped up "like money or stores of food from which you may take what you want at any time." More and more English speakers neglected to look to their own language for a new expression but went abroad to find it.

Writers like Francis Bacon and John Milton had their whole education in Latin and found it easier to write on abstract or learned subjects in Latin rather than in their own vernacular. They had little concern for the convenience of those of their readers who happened to be ignorant of the classics and had no regard for future generations who would find Latin foreign to their idiom.

Perhaps the richness of a language reveals itself best in its great number of synonyms, for these are the tools that allow expression of the subtlest shades of thought, but many synonymous terms borrowed from the classical language might best have been let alone. Why import *frigid* when there were the native words: *cold*, *cool*, *chilly*, *icy*, and *frosty*?

Poets perhaps have found lengthy Latin words better for their purposes than short native ones because they seem to lift the tone and add dignity to the structure of a sentence. It is said too that classical terms are best for international communication because they are familiar in almost all the civilized countries of the world; however, ease of communication between nations today should not make us place undue value on this utility, nor should international ease be placed above national convenience.

It is possible through words borrowed unwisely to throw language into an unnatural state, for sometimes these words have no fixed pronunciation and become merely eye words that really do not exist in the spoken language. The worst thing that can be said against many classical words is that they are difficult and hence undemocratic. A great many of them will never be used or understood by people who have not had a classical education; consequently, their great number in the language is apt to accentuate social class divisions, for there is a tendency to measure a man's worth by his ability to use these words.

In conclusion it may be said that the English language has been enriched by the classical words it has adopted since the Renaissance, but that every enrichment has not been an advantage because many have been superfluous and what is worse many have stunted the growth of our native formations.

THE SETTLEMENT OF AMERICA BY PEOPLE FROM MANY COUNTRIES

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In a book so worn by use that cover and title page have long since departed, the words, "glorious and imperial mongrel," aptly describe the English language, this comparatively young and growing member of the prolific family of Indo-European languages. The English spoken by early colonists in the New World was already the product of a "melting pot," which since 1607 has received further ingredients and continued stirring by succeeding waves of immigrants. To many people, the surprising fact is that the language is still recognizable as English and that residents all over the sprawling United States can understand each other. Experts in the field of linguistics agree that the "melting pot" type of settlement in America has had amazingly small effect on the growth and development of the English language but a large enough one to make the American language an intriguing subject for study.

As settlers moved across the United States, language patterns followed those various English dialects first established on the eastern coast so that the expressions Northern, Southern, and Midland have some general linguistic meaning. There are, of course, many lines, especially west of the Mississippi; and in certain places there is still evidence of influence by the speech of Scotch, German, French, and Spanish colonists. Later groups of Irish, Italian, Scandinavian, Central European, and Asian immigrants, eager to receive as much education as possible, tried to conform to the language of their already established neighbors. Negroes, inadvertent immigrants to the South, learned to speak the English of their masters, with small African influence except among the Gullah Negroes of South Carolina. The dialect of some modern Southerners, both White and Black, is probably the result of their having retained the early English dialect, which has been modified by more cosmopolitan citizens of all races.

Students of dialects utilize three general sub-topics: pronunciation, vocabulary, syntax. Probably the easiest and most interesting of these for beginners is vocabulary, for concrete evidence of the "melting pot" is easily recognized in this field. For example, early Dutch settlers in what is now New York contributed only a few words to the American language, but among them are sleigh and Santa Claus. Loan words from American Indians, as well as from immigrants of various nationalities, furnish many place names: Mississippi (Indian), Harlem (Dutch), Detroit (French), Santiago (Spanish). A list of foods (squash, sauerkraut, corn, chow-mein, chowder, etc.) may spark a linguistic study. The eccentricities of Pennsylvania Dutch (German) are of interest to all ages. More sophisticated students will enjoy learning to guess "home towns" by pronunciation or syntax.

Mingling daily with people of other origins made it necessary to communicate. Those who settled in isolated farming areas were slower to change, but they all tried to impress upon their children the importance of an education and of learning English. Those who came as displaced persons and refugees during and following the two great wars of the twentieth century faced many difficulties, but by then some of the harsher aspects of adjustment had been softened. Reception of new citizens was in the hands of a stable government, aided by charitable and civic organizations. Certain groups had merged into the great American middle class and were active leaders in economic and political life.

Thomas Jefferson, writing to John Waldo in 1813, stated that the "new world circumstances will call for new words, new phrases, for transfer of old words to new objects." This had been going on for quite some time prior to 1813. In their efforts to communicate, the people had combined, transferred, innovated, and invariably simplified to get down to "brass tacks." The more formal language of the universities and drawing rooms remained apart from this ever-changing mainstream.

Coining new words to meet communication needs, to name a new task, a new object, or a feeling seems to have come quite naturally to the road and canal workers, the frontiersmen, miners, mill workers, and lumberjacks. The Irish were voluble and clever at turning an apt phrase. The Germans gave us such words as pretzel, pinochle, sauerkraut, dumb, bum, stupid, and ouch. From the French we have pralines, prairie, pool-do (Poule d'eau) levee, cariole (carry-all). The Southwest's version of Spanish placed in our language the colorful words canyon, mustang, hombre, bonanza, and Alamo. High concentrations of a particular nationality gave that area its unique blend of languages and new words.

Place names give us excellent clues as to the nationalities who at some time settled there: Fond du lac, Baton Rouge, Schuylkill, Sandusky, Catalina, Susquehanna, Kennebec, Germantown, New Bern.

In his Preface to the Dictionary in 1755 Samuel Johnson stated: "as any custom is disused, the words that expressed it must perish with it; as any opinion grows popular it will innovate speech . . . As politeness increases, some expressions will be considered too gross and vulgar for the delicate, others too formal and ceremonious for the gay and airy."

Listings in telephone directories, Who's Who, and the Senate roll call, impress us with the variety of national origins represented in our population. Our language, the living language of such a population, is unmatched for richness, for meaning, for simplicity of pronunciation, for colorful dialects, and for amazing flexibility to accommodate.

Those interested in an in-depth study of linguistics should investigate the work being done on the Linguistic Atlas, already more than thirty years in the making and only partially published. Elementary school teachers and pupils who want to have some fun along this line can find it in fictional stories by authors like Lois Lenski, Doris Gates, Clara Ingram Judson; such collections as the A. C. E. publication Under the Stars and Stripes; the verses of Mary O'Neill's Words, Words, Words; and factual studies like Epstein's First Book of Words. The current interest in linguistics should mean many new books for students of all ages.

MORE ABOUT

THE SETTLEMENT OF AMERICA BY PEOPLE FROM MANY COUNTRIES

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The story of how wave after wave of immigrants have transformed a continent into a thriving, powerful nation is at the heart of American history. We have received more and a greater variety of immigrants than any other nation. Our culture, now distinctively American, is a colorful blend of the cultures of the millions who have come. The flow of people has been almost continuous, but there have been periods of mass migrations. The impact of each new group varied according to the decade of their arrival. In order of importance the impact upon the United States might be ranked as follows: population, economy, social structure, politics, and cultural development. But all these were enmeshed. Each group contributed its part to the ever-changing, growing country.

The first English settlements were followed soon by substantial groups of Scotch-Irish, Germans, Dutch, French and Swiss. Each new community had its distinctive ethnic flavor. Many were indentured servants, some were criminals, and the majority were humble folk who yearned to better themselves economically. They came to escape oppression and privation of various kinds. Promises of land and freedom lured some. Others had no choice: they had to come. These motives remained the same throughout the years, and for some the hopes became realities in their life times. For the majority, however, it required at least another generation or two to achieve their goals.

The nineteenth century saw great migrations of Irish, Scandinavians, Germans, and people from southern and eastern Europe. They came under little or no sponsorship, by open steerage, to ports of entry. Some of these pushed westward to join others of their kind. Many went to the mining and farming areas. Those who chose or had to remain in the cities created their own Irish, Italian, Czech, and other settlements where they established schools, churches, and usually their own newspapers.

To survive economically meant to adapt as quickly as possible to the new life, and their efforts at this were admirable. This huge, cheap labor force had tremendous impact on the development of industry and transportation. Their menial jobs and long hours gave them little time for looking back; but, in the security of the settlements, they enacted through song, dance, and drama their rich folk heritage.

IMPROVED MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION

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East High School
Forest City

The influence of communication and transportation on the American language may be traced through the three significant traditions in the mainstream of American literature -- the industrial revolution, the gold rush, the building of the railroad -- as the country moved from a feudalistic through an agrarian to an industrial society.

During the Colonial Period, those in The Mayflower and The Arabella groups and their successors recorded the evolution of the feudalistic society of the 1600's to the beginning of the agrarian society. The passengers on The Arabella were men of the Renaissance caught up in the new movements of the early scientific revolution, political changes, social reorganization, and religious questionings concerning the idea of the worth of an individual which had been brewing for over two hundred years. The major writers of each period in American literature reflected these conflicts.

James Fenimore Cooper, in his Leather-stocking Tales, delineated the westward sweep as Natty Bumppo moved across the vanishing frontier. Civilization crossed Appalachia person by person through Cumberland Gap in ox train or mule wagon. The covered wagon opened the prairies from the Ohio to the Mississippi; Mark Twain in Roughing It and Washington Irving in A Tour of the Prairies recorded the halcyon days before the Gold Rush of 1849. The discovery of gold catapulted the settlers to the Pacific; the completion of the transcontinental railroad provided the momentum in jig-time for the final settlement of the West. Mark Twain's Huck Finn raised the vernacular to an art: American literature came of age and the American language entered the world stream of communication.

Media of communication and transportation have accelerated from the Civil War period to the present, and the ensuing industrial changes of a more mobile society have brought colorful changes to the English language.

THE EFFECT OF TWO WORLD WARS UPON OUR LANGUAGES

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Hildebran

How have the wars of the twentieth century affected the growth and development of the English language?

Because periods of emotional stress and intense activity which characterize a people at war cause language to grow and change at an abnormally fast pace, the twentieth century has been a time for great changes in the English language.

Dr. Otto Jespersen, perhaps the world's greatest authority on the English language, observed in 1938 that "the Great War (1914-1918) left its mark on language as on everything." He listed as examples of change foreign loan-words (camouflage, U-boat); old words with new meanings (ace, gas, tank, go, West); shortened words (Zepp = Zeppelin, Conchy = conscientious objector); and slang.

These four avenues, plus new coinages, summarize the major changes in the English language attributable to wars. The greatest changes are noted in the area of vocabulary growth and in the enormous propagation of English around the world. Perhaps more than 300 million persons speak English as a first language, and millions more know English as a second language.

A list of war adoptions and adaptations during World II would be extensive. World Words (1944) listed 12,000 names and words that the War had made prominent. Included were the names of battlefields, Air Force objectives, likely places of attack, and important people whose names newscasters had to learn to pronounce. Many of these words earned a stable position in the history of English; others ceased to be important after the War.

Loan-words came from many countries. From Germany came blitzkrieg, Luftwaffe, and panzer. The Spanish Civil War of 1936 gave fifth column. Norway loaned quisling to English in 1940, a word quick to win an entry in English dictionaries. From Japan came hara-kiri with an especially grim meaning during the war years. Bushido also became familiar in 1941-1945. From the Vietnam conflict, we realize already that new words such as Viet Cong are widely known.

Besides foreign loans, old words and phrases took on new meanings during the war years and became vogue expressions. One linguist said that words are tougher than warriors and hence have lived on. Examples are barbarian, barbarism, (applied to Germans during both wars); Bolshevism; climate of opinion; dynamic (-s);

economic; engaged; fantastic; ideology; implement; integrate; militarism; propaganda; sanction (-s); scrap of paper; undertones and overtones; and wishful thinking.

Outstanding among clipped words relating to World War II are Nazi (Nationalsozialist), Gestapo (Geheime Statspolizei), radar (radio detecting and ranging), and G. I. (government issue).

The slang or argot used by the armed forces personnel adds to the store of twentieth century English words. They provided the G. I. with fun, relief from boredom, and a sense of belonging. Many terms are crude and obscene, violating the taboos of language. Familiar slang includes brass hat, black market, foxhole, snafu, and jeep.

Coinages during the war years came about in the usual ways: trade-names, morphemes (prefixes, suffixes, and bases), compounds, blends, and acronyms. There were added annually an estimated 6,000 new words to the English language as compared with 3,000 during years of peace and quiet. What the social and cultural future of these words will be we can only guess.

SCIENTIFIC, TECHNOLOGICAL, AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENTS AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Since 1500, the English language has operated like a circular magnet drawing words from ancient languages -- Greek, Latin, Arabic, and Danish -- and forming new words from contemporary languages -- French, Spanish, and Italian. At times, Mr. Perma and Mrs. Electro Magnet have had difficulty trying to learn and to remember all the new terms that their sons - Science, Technology, and Industry -- have brought home to them. Perma and Electro have allowed enduringly useful terms to become permanent houseguests in their magnetron; others that have been only temporarily useful have been dispelled after their services were no longer needed. Ever since Graph (writing) began living in one of the echo chambers, Perma has found recording the names of his houseguests much easier than it was formerly; consequently, he has kept a fairly accurate tabulation of all those who have penetrated into his force field and who have been programmed into his memory banks.

Since 1900, Science, Technology, and Industry have worked overtime trying to fill the language home with new gadgets and inventions. Science's friends -- Medicine, Chemistry, and Physics -- have given Perma so many gifts to kill germs that he seldom has problems with micro-organisms. Whenever he has tonsillitis, laryngitis, appendicitis, sinusitis, or any of the other itises, he simply takes penicillin, streptomycin, a sulfa drug, or any of the wonder-drugs that Medicine told him to store in his frigidaire. Industry took the acetylsalicylic acid, which his older brother Science discovered, and mass-produced a small tablet which Medicine named aspirin. Now Electro no longer has to suffer with nervous tension or a migraine headache; furthermore, she no longer has to stop functioning just because she has arthritis, bursitis, or rheumatism, because her sons always seem to come up with some type of pain-killer to ease or to tranquilize her real or psychosomatic illnesses. She had almost forgotten ill-bred malnutrition and anemia because her sons had developed high potency vitamins and proteins. Yes, indeed, Electro really accomplished something when she produced these sons. They really knew how to turn her current on and how to make her force field reverberate.

Most of the time the flux around the magnetron is quite calm and stabilized. Occasionally, however, Perma has to use high voltage and high amperage to discipline his sons. He almost had a trauma when his sons showed hostile and aggressive tendencies toward each other over who was to befriend the old Greek word Auto. Each son claimed that he had exclusive rights to Auto under one or more specific patents. Science declared that he needed Auto to operate dispensers, vibrators, and emulsifiers which he used in his laboratories. Technology insisted that he had to have Auto to trigger the electronic circuits that he used in radio, radar, and TV sets; moreover, he asserted that he needed the Greek for the proper operation of his atomic reactors, electron guns, and ionization probes that he used in computers, tabulators, and IBM's. Industry complained that he couldn't manufacture the complex mechanisms that his older brothers ordered him to produce for the jet and space age without self-operating equipment. Perma, at first, thought that Auto was just another Inkhorn and would soon disappear; however, the sons showed their father how Auto could provide him with horseless carriages, self-changing record players, and many work savers. When Perma saw how handy Auto was, he programmed his sons' memory banks so that they would be willing to share Auto. Electro was immediately attracted to Auto when she found out that he, coupled with their newest guest Teflon, could make her old wash-tub become an automatic washer, her sink a dishwasher, and her old blackened coffee pot a percolator. Electro's frequency went up every time she thought of all the wonderful things that her sons and houseguests could do when they unionized their efforts.

Centuries ago the Magnet language had had several bombardments of terms. Tele, a Greek, had told them that he could make everything far; Scope, another Greek, had said that he could make things become viewers. Perma gave these two terms resonant chambers; and, since that time, they have been fusing with many of the houseguests. Tele and Scope wasted no time fusing into a telescope so that Perma could scan the astronomical bodies, the lunar surface, and the man-made satellites in the stratosphere.

Tele and Scope have been in the language since the days of Galileo; and their amalgamations with others have caused the magnetic field to be cluttered with telescopes, telegrams, microscopes, synchroscopes, and many other highly technical nomenclatures.

Perma has often told Electro that he would like to be a purist and would like to keep their vocabulary small; but Electro, quite unkindly at times, has reminded her megagauss that his force field must keep on attracting ion particles because he has a built-in power supply.

Electro told her husband that she was going to turn off her energy cell and collapse her flux. Perma tried to weaken his polarity so that he wouldn't be ionized so often with radioactive particles from his sons' laboratories, research centers, and factories. Before he tried to oscillate himself to sleep, he tried to label the prefixes and suffixes lying around in the room. He kept mumbling, "SNAFU! SNAFU!" an acronym that one of his sons brought home from the army after World War II.

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TODAY

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In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, English has been growing by leaps and bounds. It has grown in territorial extent, with new and undeveloped lands like our own former Wild West and the Australian bush becoming settled with English speakers. It has markedly increased, with the number of speakers doubling since 1900. It has grown in power and influence, with many people of other lands and languages learning to speak English for purposes of trade, travel, and culture. It has grown in richness of vocabulary and expressiveness, with thousands upon thousands of new words being added to the language's treasure house by the discoveries of science and the inventiveness of its speakers.

Today, English is a leader among the world's languages. It is officially spoken in lands covering one-fifth of the earth's surface by populations numbering roughly one-tenth of the total population of the globe. It is widely distributed and serves at the same time the purposes of commerce, science, culture, and general communication. It has far outstripped its earlier rivals -- French, Spanish, Italian, German; and even though new rivals, such as Russian, Chinese, and Hindustani have appeared, they are still in no position to challenge the supremacy of English.

We must, however, remember that languages, like human beings, are not eternal. They not only grow and develop; they also wither and sicken and die. Languages do have a way of leaving their own heirs and replacements behind them. There is such a thing as preserving the language, keeping it from abuse and mistreatment, handling it as a dear and treasured friend rather than something to be kicked around.

We should cultivate our own language and try to use it effectively when we speak and when we write. We should realize its vast importance in the world of today and be proud of it, but at the same time we should also realize that nine out of ten people in the world speak something else and feel about their language as we feel about ours. We should make an attempt to learn some of those languages, both for their own sake and for the light they shed on ours.

Language is probably the greatest breeder of friendliness in the world. Misunderstandings and suspicions are cleared away by it, and people are made aware of the fact that they are not so very different after all.

Above all, we should constantly keep in mind what a priceless gift language is, how it aids in all our activities and makes cooperation and civilization possible. Without language, we sink to the level of the animals. With language, there is practically no achievement that we need be afraid to try for. Language is the highest form of material power that mankind has been endowed with and the foundation for all the other powers we have achieved or shall achieve in the future.

THE FUTURE OF ENGLISH?

During the reign of the great Elizabeth with the defeat of the Spanish Armada, England began to assume the role of world leadership it was so well fitted to play. The love of the sea and the lure of distant shores lie embedded in the hearts of an island people. Though they remain true to home and its customs and language, they are adaptable to colonization and carry with them the desire to impose those customs and language on whatever territories they infiltrate. "I must go down to the seas again" never replaces the wish, "Oh, to be in England now that April's there." As England became "mistress of the seas" and as her holdings spread to include "an empire on which the sun never set," she aspired to a prominence that culminated under her next great queen, Victoria, and established herself as economic and political mistress of half the world. Peoples who wished to communicate with her to advantage had to learn her language, just as the Saxon English had found it necessary to learn the French of their Norman masters long ago.

With the decline and dissolvement of the British Empire following the two World Wars, England's place in world leadership was assumed by the United States of America, and so English perforce remains the international language understood of economic necessity by the most important one of every ten people on earth.

It is historically safe to assume that under this compulsion, English will so remain just as long as an English speaking nation dominates with its military power and economic prowess the destinies of less prosperous peoples. However, it is also safe to assume that if the English speaking people are forced to abdicate their position of world leadership, the language of those who succeed her will replace English as the international tongue, and English will disappear from the world scene just as Latin disappeared from England following the recall of the Roman legions, and French from London following the decline of power of the Norman conquerors.

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